



Eagle Handling and Distribution Handbook for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Personnel

***Division of Migratory Bird Management
Supplements 720 FW 6
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Purpose of the Handbook

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Division of Migratory Bird Management (DMBM) designed this handbook to supplement [720 FW 6](#), Handling and Distribution of Bald and Golden Eagles and Eagle Remains. 720 FW 6 superseded Director's Order 69, published 3/30/1994. The chapter and this handbook also replace any previous guidance associated with Director's Order No. 69.

The handbook provides detailed procedures and information that support the policy (720 FW 6) and instruct Service employees on how to properly handle and transfer sick, injured, or dead eagle remains to the proper authorities and recipients. It also helps us to ensure important information is collected and properly recorded. The handbook will assist our employees in complying with the provisions of the policy so that we can achieve our objectives of:

- Increasing the number of dead eagle remains delivered to the National Eagle Repository (NER) for use in Native American religious ceremonies;
- More quickly identifying and responding to potentially large eagle mortality sources, such as poisonings, disease, areas of common vehicle collisions, or areas of common electrocutions, etc.; and
- Supporting assessments of eagle mortality by geographic location—helping the Service and our partners to manage and sustain eagle populations more efficiently and effectively.

The procedures and contacts in the handbook are subject to change. DMBM will continually update the handbook so that it reflects current standards.

For ease of use, we have developed three **quick reference guides** for the following employees:

- [Law enforcement](#) (Office of Law Enforcement Special Agents and Refuge Federal Wildlife Officers)
- [National Wildlife Refuge employees](#)
- [Other employees](#)

Definitions of Important Terms

A. A freshly dead eagle has no smell, eyes are not sunken in, and the body is usually intact and has not been scavenged.

B. The Injury and Mortality Reporting (IMR) system is an online database within the Service's Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS). It allows Service employees and others to report and access bird mortality and injury information (particularly eagle information) in a centralized location and standardized manner.

C. The National Eagle Repository (NER) is a Service facility in Colorado. It's the central location for the receipt, storage, and distribution of dead bald and golden eagle remains. The NER receives eagle remains from a variety of sources, and distributes them to members of federally recognized Tribes for religious purposes. In rare circumstances, and only with the approval of the Director, a Regional Director, or the Chief – Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), the NER may distribute eagles to others.

D. The National Forensic Laboratory is a Service facility that examines, identifies, and compares evidence using a wide range of scientific procedures and instruments. The staff attempt to link suspect, victim, and crime scene with physical evidence.

E. The National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) is a U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) facility that receives fresh dead eagles to evaluate them for avian disease and to determine the cause of death. The NWHC takes precautions to minimize damage to dead eagles during the necropsy process. After NWHC completes the necropsy, it sends dead bald and golden eagles and useable remains to the NER.

F. The Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS), affiliated with the University of Georgia, also receives fresh dead eagles to evaluate them for avian disease and to determine the cause of death. They also take precautions to minimize damage during the necropsy process and send the remains and useable remains to the NER.

G. Service law enforcement officer, in this handbook, refers to both Service OLE Special Agents and National Wildlife Refuge System Federal Wildlife Officers.

H. The National Raptor Coordinator, is the head of the National Raptor Program within the Division of Migratory Birds and is responsible for coordination and management concerns involving raptors, including eagles.

Legal Authority for the Service, the Public, Partners, and Others to Handle Eagles

Anyone handling or possessing an eagle or its remains must be covered by a migratory bird permit or a permit exception as listed in [50 CFR 21.12](#). In general, you should not be handling or transporting sick, injured, or dead eagle remains unless you are:

- *A Service law enforcement officer.* Service law enforcement is covered under an exception in [50 CFR 21.12](#).
- *A Service employee.* Service employees in all Regions (but not Headquarters) are covered under Regional Special Purpose permits that allow for the salvage of migratory birds.
 - If you are a Regional Service employee, you must have a copy of your Regional permit and [standard conditions](#) with you when handling eagles and other migratory birds. You must also be aware of any specific Regional permit conditions. For a copy of your Regional permit, contact your Regional [Migratory Bird Permit Office](#).
 - Some Regional permits specify that employees handling eagles have a copy of the Regional permit on them and submit a report about the incident within 48 hours. If reporting is a condition of the permit, you can submit your report using the Service's Injury and Mortality Reporting (IMR) database. Any Service employee can open an account and log in to IMR by going to <http://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/>. Log in with your active directory username and password under "Secure Login" in the "Secure Applications" section of the page. After you log in, click on the IMR application and begin logging records.
 - If you are a Headquarters employee, you should contact a Service law enforcement officer, or, if the eagle is alive, a licensed veterinarian or [federally permitted rehabilitator](#) to assist you with the collection and transfer of the eagle remains.
- *An employee of certain public and private institutions listed in the regulations under [50 CFR 21.12](#) (b)(1) who is receiving the eagle remains from a permitted entity or individual.*
- *An employee of a Federal, State, or local wildlife and land management agency; an employee of a Federal, State, or local public health agency; or an employee of a laboratory under contract to such agencies working to confirm the presence of infectious disease.* These employees may not handle healthy eagles or those suspected of having been injured or killed by factors other than infectious disease or natural toxins. They must contact a Service law enforcement officer to handle these cases.
- *A licensed veterinarian.*

Standard Conditions
Special Purpose - Salvage Permits
50 CFR 21.27

The provisions of the governing regulations at [50 CFR 13](#) and [50 CFR 21.27](#) are all conditions of a permit. Failure to comply with the conditions of the permit could be cause for suspension. Following are the standard conditions we include on special purpose – salvage permits for all migratory birds, including eagles:

1. This permit does not authorize personal use of any migratory bird(s) salvaged under the authority of the permit.
2. You must tag each migratory bird specimen you collect or salvage. Each tag must include:
 - (a) The date and location where the specimen was collected or salvaged, and
 - (b) The name of the person who collected or salvaged the specimen.

The permit number under which the specimen was collected or salvaged must be recorded in the permanent accession record.

3. All migratory birds salvaged under this permit must be deposited with the repository designated on the face of this permit within 6 months of acquisition or by December 31 of that calendar year.
4. Salvaged migratory birds, including parts, nests, and nonviable eggs unsuitable for donation must be completely destroyed by burial or incineration.
5. If you encounter a migratory bird with a Federal band issued by the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, MD, report the band number to 1-800-327-BAND or <https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/bblretrv/> or www.reportband.gov.
6. This permit does not authorize salvage of specimens on Federal lands without additional prior written authorization from the applicable Federal agency, or on State lands or other public or private property without prior written permission or permits from the landowner or custodian.
7. A subpermittee is an individual to whom you have provided written authorization to conduct some or all of the permitted activities in your absence. Subpermittees must be at least 18 years of age. As the permittee, you are legally responsible for ensuring that your subpermittees are adequately trained and adhere to the terms of your permit. You are responsible for maintaining current records of who you have designated as a subpermittee, including copies of designation letters you have provided. Other individuals, including those under the age of 18, may conduct the permitted activities only if you or a designated subpermittee are present.
8. You and any subpermittees must carry a legible copy of this permit and display it upon request when exercising its authority. Subpermittees must also carry your written

subpermittee designation letter.

9. You must maintain records as required by [50 CFR 13.46](#) and [50 CFR 21.27](#). All records relating to the permitted activities must be kept at the location indicated in writing by you to the migratory bird permit issuing office.

10. Acceptance of this permit authorizes the Service to inspect any wildlife held, and to audit or copy any permits, books, or records required by the permit and governing regulations.

11. You may not conduct the activities authorized by this permit if doing so would violate the laws of the applicable State, county, municipal, or Tribal government or any other applicable law.

If you have any questions regarding these conditions, refer to the regulations or contact your Regional Migratory Bird Permit Office. For copies of the regulations and forms, or to obtain contact information for your issuing office, visit the [Migratory Birds' permits website](#).

Quick Reference Guide for Service Law Enforcement

Assisting Third Parties with Dead Eagles

When Service Law Enforcement employees are assisting/advising non-Service personnel with handling eagles, they should first make sure investigation is not necessary, and then assist the third party in determining the proper course of action based on the instructions in this handbook on Reporting, Documentation, Collection and Transfer of the eagle. Service employees should make sure all third parties are aware that [they must have a permit or fall under a permit exception](#) to pick up birds; otherwise, they need to have a permitted individual come pick up the bird for them. Service employees can give approval for third parties to use the Service Fedex number to pay for shipping of eagles to labs on a case-by-case basis, but only if certain conditions are met as indicated in the [shipping payment instructions](#) section of the handbook. If granting approval, Service employees should ensure the third party is aware that they must package the eagle properly (double-triple bagging, leak proof containers/materials, absorbent materials, etc.) to prevent leakage, smell and further decomposition during transport.

Step 1: [Reporting](#)

Type		Scenario	How to Proceed
Live eagles		None.	Do not approach or try to handle the eagle yourself. Contact a federally permitted rehabber or trained professional for assistance. To find out what rehabilitation experts are near you and to get proper assistance, contact your Regional Migratory Bird Program Office or Permit Office , or any Regional biologist involved in eagle research.
Dead eagle remains	All	If an investigation is deemed not necessary.	Proceed with the Documentation, Collection and Transfer processes below.
		If an investigation is necessary.	Follow Service law enforcement protocols for documentation and sending of the eagle to the National Forensics Lab in Ashland, OR.

Step 2: [Documentation](#)

Step 1	Follow the instructions for " Collecting photos and information about the discovery " in this handbook.
Step 2	<p>If the eagle <i>is NOT</i> being sent to the NWHC, SCWDS, or a lab on the list of Other Approved Labs and Service Law Enforcement has not retained it (e.g., it is being sent directly to the National Eagle Repository), especially if it meets one of the following criteria, make sure it gets reported in the Injury and Mortality Reporting (IMR) System. If an eagle is found on a facility operated by a permittee or a facility with a reporting agreement with the Service, make sure it is clear who will be reporting the information about the discovery to the Service so that we do not have duplicate records. Some permit conditions make reporting the responsibility of the permittee, while some Regions may choose to enter the information themselves. Although all injury and mortality information is important, of particular interest for reporting are eagles injured or killed at the site of utilities (e.g., wind, solar, electric) that were retrieved under a Special Purpose Utility (SPUT) or Eagle Programmatic Take permit (see 50 CFR 22.26). This information is particularly useful if: (a) The specific location and information regarding the incident is available; (b) The eagle is freshly dead and fully intact; (c) The eagle is telemetered or banded; (d) The injury or mortality may fit a pattern of recurring, unmitigated take, such as electrocutions, wind turbine strikes, high vehicle collision areas, etc.; or (e) The injury or mortality is part of a mass mortality or injury event. If you are not able to enter the information in the IMR system yourself, follow the Service Law Enforcement Protocol for Communicating Basic Information about Non-Investigative Incidents for Capture in IMR.</p> <p>If the eagle is being sent to NWHC, SCWDS, or a lab on the list of Other Approved Labs, you do not have to report it in IMR, but make sure you thoroughly fill out both an Eagle Recovery Tag (FWS Form 3-2480) and a lab submission form. Securely attach the tag to the eagle, and include the lab submission form in the box with the eagle when shipping. If the Eagle Recovery Tag has a unique ID, record that on the lab submission form; otherwise, follow the directions for assigning a unique ID. Please also indicate somewhere on either the Eagle Recovery Tag or lab form that it has been determined an investigation is not needed, and include your name or the name of the officer who confirmed this (if different).</p> <p>How to Log In to IMR and Start Entering Information: All Service employees should be able to automatically log in to IMR and start reporting information. To log in, go to: http://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/ and click on Secure Login under "Secure Applications." Use your Active Directory Login to log in and then select "IMR" from the list of applications. If for some reason you are not able to use IMR, contact Meghan Sadlowski (Meghan_Sadlowski@fws.gov) at Headquarters to discuss potentially using a compatible spreadsheet.</p>

Step 3: [Collection](#)

Type	Instructions
Live eagles	<p>Do not approach or try to handle the eagle yourself. Contact a federally permitted rehabber or trained professional for assistance. To find out what rehabilitation experts are near you and to get proper assistance, contact your Regional Migratory Bird Program Office or Permit Office, or any Regional biologist involved in eagle research.</p>
Dead eagle remains	<p>Wear rubber, latex, or nitrile gloves. Attach a tag securely to the remains, if possible. If the eagle is intact, attach it to the leg. You can use either an OLE evidence seizure tag, another USFWS-generated tag (as these are developed), or a tag with fields that capture, at a minimum, the information listed in the "Eagle Recovery Tags" section of this handbook. If your tag does not already contain a Unique ID, follow the instructions for assigning a unique ID. If you've entered a record into IMR, put the IMR unique ID on all the documentation you send with the eagle, even if it is in addition to other unique IDs. Please also indicate somewhere on either the tag attached to the eagle or form to be shipped with the eagle that it has been determined an investigation is not needed, and include your name or the name officer who confirmed this (if different).</p> <p>If sending the eagle to a lab, in addition to the tag, fill out and include the lab's necropsy submission form and make sure you also put your unique ID and IMR number (if applicable) on the lab submission form. Place the eagle in a plastic bag (double-bagging is recommended), seal the bag, and label it. Do not tape or tie the bag close to the tail feathers. If possible, transport the eagle separately from the driver's compartment of your vehicle, such as in the back of a pickup truck, or store it in a cooler for transport. If the dead eagle remains are fresh: keeping them cool, but not frozen (e.g., in a refrigerator or cooler with blue ice packs/bag of ice), increases the usefulness during necropsy, especially if avian disease is a possible cause of death. Do not store the eagle in a fridge that the personnel at the duty station use for their meals. If you are unable to transfer the eagle to a lab within 24 hours of discovery, you should freeze the eagle.</p>

Step 4: Transfer

Type		After following steps above for reporting, documentation, and collection...	Exceptions
Live eagles		Do not approach or try to handle the eagle yourself. A federally permitted rehabber or trained professional should be the one to collect and transfer the eagle.	None.
Freshly dead eagle remains	Non-telemetered	Follow shipping instructions in the handbook for shipping to the NWHC , or if using a lab on the List of Other Approved Labs , call the lab and obtain proper shipping and shipping payment instructions. For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS or NWHC or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook.	All eagles found in CA and not of interest to Service law enforcement should go to the CA Fish & Wildlife, Wildlife Investigations Lab
	Telemetered golden eagles	Follow shipping instructions in the handbook for shipping to the SCWDS lab , or if using a lab on the List of Other Approved Labs , call the lab and obtain proper shipping instructions. Telemetry devices should be shipped with the eagle unless instructed otherwise by the Principal Investigator over the study. If you are uncertain who the Principal Investigator for the study is, contact the National Raptor Coordinator . For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS or NWHC or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook.	
	Telemetered bald eagles	Bald eagles with transmitters should ideally be sent to a laboratory (either SCWDS , NWHC , or one of the labs on the List of Other Approved Labs). If the Principal Investigator over the study is known, he/she can instruct you about where to send the eagle. If you are uncertain who the Principal Investigator for the study is, contact the National Raptor Coordinator . For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS, NWHC, or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook .	
Non-fresh dead eagle remains	Non-telemetered	Ship the eagle directly to the NER following NER shipping instructions in the handbook.	All eagles found in CA and not of interest to Service law enforcement go to the CA Fish & Wildlife, Wildlife Investigations Lab
	Telemetered golden eagles	Follow shipping instructions in the handbook for shipping to the SCWDS lab or if using a lab on the List of Other Approved Labs , call the lab and obtain proper shipping instructions. Telemetry devices should be shipped with the eagle unless instructed otherwise by the Principal Investigator over the study. If you are uncertain who the Principal Investigator for the study is, contact the National Raptor Coordinator . For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS, NWHC, or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook.	
	Telemetered bald eagles	Bald eagles with transmitters should ideally be sent to a laboratory (either SCWDS , NWHC , or one of the labs on the List of Other Approved Labs). If the Principal Investigator over the study is known, he/she can instruct you about where to send the eagle. If you are uncertain who the Principal Investigator for the study is, contact the National Raptor Coordinator . For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS, NWHC, or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook .	

Quick Reference Guide for National Wildlife Refuge Staff

Assisting Third Parties with Dead Eagles

When Service employees on Refuge lands are assisting/advising non-Service personnel with handling eagles, employees should make sure the third party has contacted [Service law enforcement](#) about the injury/mortality to make sure an investigation is not necessary, and then assist the third party in determining the proper course of action based on the instructions in this handbook on Reporting, Documentation, Collection, and Transfer of the eagle. Service employees should make sure all third parties are aware that [they must have a permit or fall under a permit exception](#) to pick up birds; otherwise, they need to have a permitted individual come pick up the bird for them. Service employees can give approval for third parties to use the Service Fedex number to pay for shipping of eagles to labs on a case-by-case basis, but only if certain conditions are met as indicated in the [shipping payment instructions](#) section of the handbook. If granting approval, Service employees should ensure the third party is aware that they must package the eagle properly (double-triple bagging, leak proof containers/materials, absorbent materials, etc.) to prevent leakage, smell and further decomposition during transport.

Step 1: [Reporting](#)

For any eagle discovered, live, dead (fresh or not fresh), the **first step** is to contact a Service law enforcement officer in your Region as soon as possible, using the [Contact Information](#) in this handbook. Then, follow the guidance below depending on the scenario and eagle type listed.

Type	Scenario	How to Proceed	Exceptions	
Live eagles	If you unable to immediately reach a Service law enforcement officer for further instructions.	Do not approach or try to handle the eagle yourself. Contact a federally permitted rehabber or trained professional for assistance. To find out what rehabilitation experts are near you and to get proper assistance, contact your Regional Migratory Bird Program Office or Permit Office , or any Regional biologist involved in eagle research.	Regardless of whether the dead eagle is fresh or not fresh, if the eagle was found on Tribal lands or Alaskan Native regional or local village (ANSCA) lands, you must not do anything with it until you have talked to a Service law enforcement officer. The only exception to this prohibition is for telemetered golden eagles.	
Dead eagle remains	All	If you are able talk to a Service law enforcement officer and they are not interested in taking custody or coming to investigate further.		Proceed with the Documentation, Collection and Transfer processes in this handbook.
		If you are able talk to a Service law enforcement officer and they want to take custody or come to investigate further.		Leave the eagle remains in place and let law enforcement take care of it unless instructed otherwise by an officer.
		If you are unable to reach a Service law enforcement officer within 24 hours after discovery (or sooner if you feel the remains are in jeopardy of being scavenged or you might lose evidence to help determine cause of death).		Proceed with the Documentation and Collection processes, but unless the dead eagle is fresh , do not proceed with the transfer process until you talk to law enforcement and law enforcement confirms they do not want to take custody.
Dead eagle remains	Fresh	If you are able to talk to Service law enforcement within 24 hours after discovery, and law enforcement wants to take custody or come to investigate further.		Leave the eagle in place and let law enforcement take care of it unless instructed otherwise by an officer.
		If you unable to reach a Service law enforcement officer within 24 hours after discovery, even after repeated attempts and assistance from your Regional Migratory Bird Permit Office .		Proceed with the Documentation, Collection, and Transfer processes making sure the chain of custody is kept clear. You may proceed with the Documentation and Collection process (just not the Transfer process) sooner than 24 hours if you feel the remains are in jeopardy of being scavenged or you might lose evidence to help determine cause of death.

Step 2: [Documentation](#)

Step 1	Follow the instructions for " Collecting photos and information about the discovery " in this handbook.
Step 2	<p>If the eagle <i>is NOT</i> being sent to the NWHC, SCWDS, or a lab on the list of Other Approved Labs and Service law enforcement has not retained it (e.g., it is being sent directly to the National Eagle Repository), especially if it meets one of the following criteria, make sure it gets reported in the Injury and Mortality Reporting (IMR) System. If an eagle is found on a facility operated by a permittee or a facility with a reporting agreement with the Service, make sure it is clear who will be reporting the information about the discovery to the Service so that we do not have duplicate records. Some permit conditions make reporting the responsibility of the permittee, while some Regions may choose to enter the information themselves. Although all injury and mortality information is important, of particular interest for reporting are eagles injured or killed at the site of utilities (e.g., wind, solar, electric) that were retrieved under a Special Purpose Utility (SPUT) or Eagle Programmatic Take permit (see 50 CFR 22.26). This information is particularly useful if: (a) The specific location and information regarding the incident is available; (b) The eagle is freshly dead and fully intact; (c) The eagle is telemetered or banded; (d) The injury or mortality may fit a pattern of recurring, unmitigated take, such as electrocutions, wind turbine strikes, high vehicle collision areas, etc.; or (e) The injury or mortality is part of a mass mortality or injury event.</p> <p>If the eagle is being sent to NWHC, SCWDS or a lab on the list of Other Approved Labs, you do not have to report it in IMR, but make sure you thoroughly fill out both an Eagle Recovery Tag and a lab submission form. Securely attach the tag to the eagle, and include the lab submission form in the box with the eagle when shipping. If the Eagle Recovery Tag has a unique ID, place that on the lab submission form; otherwise, follow the directions for assigning a unique ID. Please also indicate somewhere on either the Eagle Recovery Tag or form if you've checked with Service law enforcement to determine an investigation is not needed, and the name of the officer who confirmed this.</p> <p>How to Log In to IMR and Start Entering Information: All Service employees should be able to automatically log in to IMR and start reporting information. To log in, go to: http://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/ and click on Secure Login under "Secure Applications." Use your Active Directory Login to log in and then select "IMR" from the list of applications. If for some reason you are not able to use IMR, contact Meghan Sadlowski (Meghan_Sadlowski@fws.gov) at Headquarters to discuss potentially using a compatible spreadsheet.</p>

Step 3: [Collection](#)

Type	Instructions
Live eagles	Do not approach or try to handle the eagle yourself. Contact a federally permitted rehabber or trained professional for assistance. To find out what rehabilitation experts are near you and to get proper assistance, contact your Regional Migratory Bird Program Office or Permit Office , or any Regional biologist involved in eagle research.
Dead eagle remains	<p>Wear rubber, latex, or nitrile gloves. Attach an Eagle Recovery tag securely to the remains, if possible. If the eagle is intact, attach it to the leg. You can use either an OLE evidence seizure tag, another USFWS form or tag with fields that capture, at a minimum, the information listed in the "Eagle Recovery Tags" section of the handbook. If your tag does not already contain a Unique ID, follow the instructions for assigning a unique ID. If you've entered a record IMR, put the IMR unique ID on all the documentation you send with the eagle, even if it is in addition to other unique IDs. Also indicate somewhere on the tag if you've checked with Service law enforcement to determine an investigation is not needed, and the name of the officer who confirmed this.</p> <p>If sending the eagle to a lab, in addition to the Eagle Recovery Tag, fill out and include the lab's necropsy submission form and make sure you also put your unique ID and IMR number (if applicable) on the lab submission form. Place the eagle in a plastic bag (double-bagging is recommended), seal the bag, and label it. Do not tape or tie the bag close to the tail feathers. If possible, transport the eagle separately from the driver's compartment of your vehicle, such as in the back of a pickup truck, or store it in a cooler for transport. If the dead eagle remains are fresh, keeping them cool, but not frozen (e.g., in a refrigerator or cooler with blue ice packs/bag of ice), increases the usefulness during necropsy, especially if avian disease is a possible cause of death. Do not store the eagle in a fridge that the personnel at the duty station use for their meals. If you are unable to transfer the eagle to a lab within 24 hours of discovery, you should freeze the eagle.</p>

Step 4: Transfer

Type		After following steps above for reporting, documentation, and collection...	Exceptions
Live eagles		Do not approach or try to handle the eagle yourself. A federally permitted rehabber or trained professional should be the one to collect and transfer the eagle.	None.
Freshly dead eagle remains	Non-tele-metered	Follow shipping instructions in the handbook for shipping to the NWHC , or if using a lab on the List of Other Approved Labs , call the lab and obtain proper shipping and shipping payment instructions. For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS or NWHC or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook.	If, within 24 hours of discovery, Service law enforcement instructs you that they will take custody, the officer will send the eagle to the National Forensics Lab.
	Telemetered golden eagles	Follow shipping instructions in the handbook for shipping to the SCWDS lab , or if using a lab on the List of Other Approved Labs , call the lab and obtain proper shipping instructions. Telemetry devices should be shipped with the eagle unless instructed otherwise by the Principal Investigator over the study. If you are uncertain who the Principal Investigator for the study is, contact the National Raptor Coordinator . For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS or NWHC or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook.	After 24 hours, if you cannot get in touch with law enforcement, you may transfer the eagle to the appropriate laboratory; however, make sure the chain of custody is kept clear (use page 2 of the sample Eagle Recovery Tag form in this handbook, if necessary), indicate on the Eagle Recovery Tag that you did not talk to an officer before sending the eagle to the lab, and make sure you follow instructions for assigning a unique ID to the eagle
	Telemetered bald eagles	Bald eagles with transmitters should ideally be sent to a laboratory (either SCWDS , NWHC , or one of the labs on the List of Other Approved Labs). If the Principal Investigator over the study is known, he/she can instruct you about where to send the eagle. If you are uncertain who the Principal Investigator for the study is, contact the National Raptor Coordinator . For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS, NWHC, or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook .	All eagles found in CA and not of interest to Service law enforcement should go to the CA Fish & Wildlife, Wildlife Investigations Lab
Non-fresh dead eagle remains	Non-telemetered	Ship the eagle directly to the NER following NER shipping instructions in the handbook.	
	Telemetered golden eagles	Follow shipping instructions in the handbook for shipping to the SCWDS lab or if using a lab on the List of Other Approved Labs , call the lab and obtain proper shipping instructions. Telemetry devices should be shipped with the eagle unless instructed otherwise by the Principal Investigator over the study. If you are uncertain who the Principal Investigator for the study is, contact the National Raptor Coordinator . For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS, NWHC, or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook.	If Service law enforcement instructs you that they will take custody, the officer will send the eagle to the National Forensics Lab.
	Telemetered bald eagles	Bald eagles with transmitters should ideally be sent to a laboratory (either SCWDS , NWHC , or one of the labs on the List of Other Approved Labs). If the Principal Investigator over the study is known, he/she can instruct you about where to send the eagle. If you are uncertain who the Principal Investigator for the study is, contact the National Raptor Coordinator . For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS, NWHC, or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook .	All eagles found in CA and not of interest to Service law enforcement go to the CA Fish & Wildlife, Wildlife Investigations Lab

Quick Reference Guide for All Other Service Staff

Assisting Third Parties with Dead Eagles

When Service employees are assisting/advising non-Service personnel with handling eagles, employees should make sure the third party has contacted [Service law enforcement](#) about the injury/mortality to make sure an investigation is not necessary, and then assist the third party in determining the proper course of action based on the instructions in this handbook on Reporting, Documentation, Collection, and Transfer of the eagle. Service employees should make sure all third parties are aware that [they must have a permit or fall under a permit exception](#) to pick up birds; otherwise, they need to have a permitted individual come pick up the bird for them.

Service employees can give approval for third parties to use the Service Fedex number to pay for shipping of eagles to labs on a case-by-case basis, but only if certain conditions are met as indicated in the [shipping payment instructions](#) section of the handbook. If granting approval, Service employees should ensure the third party is aware that they must package the eagle properly (double-triple bagging, leak proof containers/materials, absorbent materials, etc.) to prevent leakage, smell and further decomposition during transport.

Step 1: [Reporting](#)

For any eagle discovered, live, dead (fresh or not fresh), the **first step** is to contact a Service law enforcement officer in your Region as soon as possible, using the [Contact Information](#) in this handbook. Then, follow the guidance below depending on the scenario and eagle type listed.

Type	Scenario	How to Proceed	Exceptions
Live eagles	If you unable to immediately reach a Service law enforcement officer for further instructions.	Do not approach or try to handle the eagle yourself. Contact a federally permitted rehabber or trained professional for assistance. To find out what rehabilitation experts are near you and to get proper assistance, contact your Regional Migratory Bird Program Office or Permit Office , or any Regional biologist involved in eagle research.	Regardless of whether the dead eagle is fresh or not fresh, if the eagle was found on Tribal lands or Alaskan Native regional or local village (ANSCA) lands, you must not do anything with it until you have talked to a Service law enforcement officer. The only exception to this prohibition is for telemetered golden eagles.
Dead eagle remains	All If you are able talk to a Service law enforcement officer and they are not interested in taking custody or coming to investigate further.	Proceed with the Documentation, Collection, and Transfer processes in this handbook.	
	All If you are able talk to a Service law enforcement officer and they want to take custody or come to investigate further.	Leave the eagle remains in place and let law enforcement take care of it unless instructed otherwise by an officer.	
	All If you are unable to reach a Service law enforcement officer within 24 hours after discovery (or sooner if you feel the remains are in jeopardy of being scavenged or you might lose evidence to help determine cause of death).	Proceed with the Documentation and Collection processes, but unless the dead eagle is fresh , do not proceed with the Transfer process until you talk to law enforcement and law enforcement confirms they do not want to take custody.	
Dead eagle remains	Fresh If you are able to talk to Service law enforcement within 24 hours after discovery, and law enforcement wants to take custody or come to investigate further.	Leave the eagle remains in place and let law enforcement take care of it unless instructed otherwise by an officer.	
	Fresh If you unable to reach a Service law enforcement officer within 24 hours after discovery, even after repeated attempts and assistance from your Regional Migratory Bird Permit Office .	Proceed with the Documentation, Collection, and Transfer processes making sure the chain of custody is kept clear. You may proceed with the Documentation and Collection process (just not the Transfer process) sooner than 24 hours if you feel the remains are in jeopardy of being scavenged or you might lose evidence to help determine cause of death.	

Step 2: [Documentation](#)

Step 1	Follow the instructions for " Collecting photos and information about the discovery " in this handbook.
Step 2	<p>If the eagle <i>is NOT</i> being sent to the NWHC, SCWDS, or a lab on the list of Other Approved Labs and Service law enforcement has not retained it (e.g., it is being sent directly to the National Eagle Repository), especially if it meets one of the following criteria, make sure it gets reported in the Injury and Mortality Reporting (IMR) System. If an eagle is found on a facility operated by a permittee or a facility with a reporting agreement with the Service, make sure it is clear who will be reporting the information about the discovery to the Service so that we do not have duplicate records. Some permit conditions make reporting the responsibility of the permittee, while some Regions may choose to enter the information themselves. Although all injury and mortality information is important, of particular interest for reporting are eagles injured or killed at the site of utilities (e.g., wind, solar, electric) that were retrieved under a Special Purpose Utility (SPUT) or Eagle Programmatic Take permit (see 50 CFR 22.26). This information is particularly useful if: (a) The specific location and information regarding the incident is available; (b) The eagle is freshly dead and fully intact; (c) The eagle is telemetered or banded; (d) The injury or mortality may fit a pattern of recurring, unmitigated take, such as electrocutions, wind turbine strikes, high vehicle collision areas, etc.; or (e) The injury or mortality is part of a mass mortality or injury event.</p> <p>If the eagle is being sent to NWHC, SCWDS, or a lab on the list of Other Approved Labs, you do not have to report it in IMR, but make sure you thoroughly fill out both an Eagle Recovery Tag and a lab submission form. Securely attach the Eagle Recovery Tag to the eagle, and include the lab submission form in the box with the eagle when shipping. If the Eagle Recovery Tag has a unique ID, place that on the lab submission form; otherwise, follow the directions for assigning a unique ID. Also indicate somewhere on either the Eagle Recovery Tag or form if you've checked with Service law enforcement to determine an investigation is not needed, and the name of the officer who confirmed this.</p> <p>How to Log In to IMR and Start Entering Information: All Service employees should be able to automatically log in to IMR and start reporting information. To log in, go to: http://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/ and click on Secure Login under "Secure Applications." Use your Active Directory Login to log in and then select "IMR" from the list of applications. If for some reason you are not able to use IMR, contact Meghan Sadlowski (Meghan_Sadlowski@fws.gov) at Headquarters to discuss potentially using a compatible spreadsheet.</p>

Step 3: [Collection](#)

Type	Instructions
Live eagles	Do not approach or try to handle the eagle yourself. Contact a federally permitted rehabber or trained professional for assistance. To find out what rehabilitation experts are near you and to get proper assistance, contact your Regional Migratory Bird Program Office or Permit Office , or any Regional biologist involved in eagle research.
Dead eagle remains	<p>Wear rubber, latex, or nitrile gloves. Attach a tag securely to the remains, if possible. If the eagle is intact, attach it to the leg. You can use either an OLE evidence seizure tag, another USFWS form or tag with fields that capture, at a minimum, the information listed in the Eagle Recovery Tags section of the handbook. If your tag does not already contain a Unique ID, follow the instructions for assigning a unique ID. If you've entered a record into IMR, put the IMR unique ID on all the documentation you send with the eagle, even if it is in addition to other unique IDs. Please also indicate somewhere on the tag if you've checked with Service law enforcement to determine an investigation is not needed, and the name of the officer who confirmed this.</p> <p>If sending the eagle to a lab, in addition to the Eagle Recovery Tag, fill out and include the lab's necropsy submission form and make sure you also put your unique ID and IMR number (if applicable) on the lab submission form. Place the eagle in a plastic bag (double-bagging is recommended), seal the bag, and label it. Do not tape or tie the bag close to the tail feathers. If possible, transport the eagle separately from the driver's compartment of your vehicle, such as in the back of a pickup truck, or store it in a cooler for transport. If the dead eagle remains are fresh, keeping them cool, but not frozen (e.g., in a refrigerator or cooler with blue ice packs/bag of ice), increases the usefulness during necropsy, especially if avian disease is a possible cause of death. Do not store the eagle in a fridge that the personnel at the duty station use for their meals. If you are unable to transfer the eagle to a lab within 24 hours of discovery, you should freeze the eagle.</p>

Step 4: Transfer

Type		After following steps above for reporting, documentation, and collection...	Exceptions
Live eagles		Do not approach or try to handle the eagle yourself. A federally permitted rehabber or trained professional should be the one to collect and transfer the eagle.	None.
Freshly dead eagle remains	Non-tele-metered	Follow shipping instructions in the handbook for shipping to the NWHC , or if using a lab on the List of Other Approved Labs , call the lab and obtain proper shipping and shipping payment instructions. For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS or NWHC or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook.	If, within 24 hours of discovery, Service law enforcement instructs you that they will take custody, the officer will send the eagle to the National Forensics Lab.
	Telemetered golden eagles	Follow shipping instructions in the handbook for shipping to the SCWDS lab or if using a lab on the List of Other Approved Labs , call the lab and obtain proper shipping instructions. Telemetry devices should be shipped with the eagle unless instructed otherwise by the Principal Investigator over the study. If you are uncertain who the Principal Investigator for the study is, contact the National Raptor Coordinator . For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS or NWHC or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook.	After 24 hours, if you cannot get in touch with law enforcement, you may transfer the eagle to the appropriate laboratory; however, make sure the chain of custody is kept clear (use page 2 of the sample Eagle Recovery Tag form in this handbook, if necessary). Indicate on the Eagle Recovery Tag that you did not talk to an officer before sending the eagle to the lab, and make sure you follow instructions for assigning a unique ID to the eagle
	Telemetered bald eagles	Bald eagles with transmitters should ideally be sent to a laboratory (either SCWDS, NWHC , or one of the labs on the List of Other Approved Labs). If the Principal Investigator over the study is known, he/she can instruct you about where to send the eagle. If you are uncertain who the Principal Investigator for the study is, contact the National Raptor Coordinator . For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS, NWHC, or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook .	All eagles found in CA and not of interest to Service law enforcement should go to the CA Fish & Wildlife, Wildlife Investigations Lab
Non-fresh dead eagle remains	Non-telemetered	Ship the eagle remains directly to the NER following NER shipping instructions in the handbook.	
	Telemetered golden eagles	Follow shipping instructions in the handbook for shipping to the SCWDS lab or if using a lab on the List of Other Approved Labs , call the lab and obtain proper shipping instructions. Telemetry devices should be shipped with the eagle unless instructed otherwise by the Principal Investigator over the study. If you are uncertain who the Principal Investigator for the study is, contact the National Raptor Coordinator . For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS, NWHC, or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook.	If Service law enforcement instructs you that they will take custody, the officer will send the eagle to the National Forensics Lab.
	Telemetered bald eagles	Bald eagles with transmitters should ideally be sent to a laboratory (either SCWDS , NWHC , or one of the labs on the List of Other Approved Labs). If the Principal Investigator over the study is known, he/she can instruct you about where to send the eagle. If you are uncertain who the Principal Investigator for the study is, contact the National Raptor Coordinator . For instructions on handling shipping costs to SCWDS, NWHC, or labs on the List of Other Approved Labs that do not pay for their own shipping, refer to the Shipping Payment for Eagles Being Sent to NWHC, SCWDS, and Select Labs section of the handbook .	All eagles found in CA and not of interest to Service law enforcement go to the CA Fish & Wildlife, Wildlife Investigations Lab

Protocol for Handling Eagles with Tracking Devices (Telemetry Backpacks)

Bald Eagles Marked with Tracking Devices

For sick, injured, or dead bald eagle remains with tracking devices, follow the instructions for [Reporting](#), [Documentation](#) and [Collection](#) we describe earlier in this handbook. If Service law enforcement takes custody of the bird, they will decide how the transmitter will be handled.

Contact the Principal Investigator (if known) over the study to inform him/her that one of his/her transmitted eagles has been recovered. He/she can tell you what to do with the transmitter (if law enforcement doesn't take custody of the bird) and where to send it. If the Principal Investigator is not known, contact the [National Raptor Coordinator](#). Ideally, dead bald eagles with transmitters should be sent to a laboratory.

When transmitters are removed from the eagle, if the transmitter has a solar energy collector on top, the transmitter should remain in the sun, in a windowsill, or otherwise exposed to natural light until the transmitter can be shipped to the researcher or the Service.

Golden Eagles Marked with Tracking Devices

Introduction

In 2010, the Division of Migratory Bird Management (DMBM) began a multi-year collaborative study of golden eagle ecology that uses satellite telemetry, and could include other telemetry systems for tracking movements of individual eagles. The telemetry is providing critically needed information on mortality sources, age-specific survival rates, natal dispersal, habitat associations, and seasonal movements of eagles. A goal of the study is to identify a likely mortality and work through a network of cooperating biologists to recover the eagles' remains and document associated field evidence within 24 hours.

Death or injury of some eagles with transmitters may be associated with illegal activity, such as shooting, poisoning, or electrocution. Such cases warrant investigation by a Service law enforcement officer. This protocol, developed by OLE and the Migratory Bird Program, describes steps to follow when it's likely that a telemetered golden eagle has died. These steps involve routine communications by biologists with Service law enforcement about any known or likely mortality of a telemetered golden eagle, and how to approach sites, document circumstances, and handle dead eagles. These steps complement, but do not substitute for: (1) the "[Submission of Telemetered Golden Eagles](#)" protocol established by DMBM and the SCWDS program, and (2) the steps for reporting, documentation, collection, and transfer in the "[Reporting, Documentation, Collection and Transfer Procedures](#)" section of this handbook.

Terms Used

We use the term ‘*dead eagle*’ below to generally describe any and all remains of an eagle, including when the eagle has been scavenged, including scattered feathers or part of a wing, head, torso, or leg.

There are rare occasions when an eagle is thought to be dead, but is injured. Descriptions in this protocol assume the former. Injured eagles require careful handling and treatment and need to be transferred to a veterinarian or rehabilitator with expertise in the treatment of injured raptors. For instructions on how to handle a live, sick, or injured eagle, refer to the guidance for live eagles in the “[Reporting, Documentation, Collection and Transfer Procedures](#)” section of this handbook.

Locating Dead Golden Eagles

Modern satellite transmitters typically acquire a GPS location (a “fix”) every hour throughout the day, plus a midnight location, with ± 18 meter accuracy. A batch of such locations typically is collected over a 3-day period, and then is transferred to a satellite or cell tower. After processing at a receiving station, the data can be accessed anywhere by personal computer. Updated location data for an eagle can then be transformed quickly into a *.kml* file and viewed in *Google Earth*[™].

Mortality is suggested if:

- There are no fixes more than 25 meters from other fixes in the most recent 24-hour period, or
- There is no movement in the most recent 72-hour period.

In a separate *.txt* file, GPS locations are reported sequentially in decimal degrees at Greenwich Mean Time. Some PTTs are programmed to send a mortality code after 24 hours with no movement. Location of these PTT units on the ground can be aided by a small, 412-mHz receiver and hand-held Yagi antenna. However, close scrutiny of the most recent location data has proven to be the most reliable means of noting likely mortality. Accuracy of the GPS fixes typically has been within 10 miles of PTTs, so ground tracking with receiver and antenna are seldom necessary. On occasion, a PTT may be removed by an eagle, or it may have been attached with a harness designed to fall off within 1-2 years.

If you find data evidence of likely mortality, follow the instructions in the “[Reporting, Documentation, Collection and Transfer](#)” section of this handbook, keeping the following in mind.

- (1) Notify a Service law enforcement officer as soon as possible (see [contact information](#) section in this handbook).
- (2) Attempt to locate the dead eagle within your legal authority for access. Do not enter private property or Tribal reservation lands without permission.
- (3) Continue to attempt to contact Service law enforcement, preferably by cell phone, as soon as you begin to try to locate and retrieve the dead eagle and until you find it. If you do not find a dead eagle, you should still notify the Service law enforcement office, even

if it's just to leave a message.

(4) An eagle may have removed its transmitter, or someone may have removed it from the eagle. Both situations should be obvious based on appearance of the transmitter and harness, such as whether the harness is torn or shredded (appearance of repeated biting) or is neatly cut off with a knife or scissors.

(5) If you suspect illegal take based on the appearance of the transmitter/harness and other evidence at the site, and you cannot reach a Service law enforcement officer immediately via phone, you may document and photograph the site and the condition of the transmitter/harness just as you would for other types of eagle remains.

(6) If Service law enforcement takes custody of the bird, they will decide how to handle the transmitter. If Service law enforcement does not take custody of the bird, unless the Principal Investigator over the study decides to remove the transmitter, it should be sent with the eagle to the SCWDS lab.

Service Law Enforcement Protocol for Communicating Basic Information about Non-Investigative Incidents for Capture in the Injury and Mortality Reporting (IMR) System

This protocol establishes a voluntary process to use when a Service law enforcement employee is the first Service employee on the scene of an eagle injury or mortality incident that will not be associated with a law enforcement investigation. The protocol details what information should be captured and when and where the eagle and information should be sent.

Although all eagle injury and mortality incident information is important, we are particularly interested in any eagle mortality/injury incidents where:

- The eagle is freshly dead (has no smell, eyes are not sunken in, and the body is usually intact and has not been scavenged)*
- The eagle is telemetered* or banded
- The injury or mortality may fit a pattern of recurring, unmitigated take, such as electrocutions, wind turbine strikes, high vehicle collision areas, etc. (and there is visual evidence to support this and/or the carcass will be sent to the lab for a determination)
- The injury or mortality is part of a mass mortality or injury event

***Freshly dead and telemetered eagles should be sent to a lab, AND you do not need to enter information about these eagles in IMR** because we will receive this information from the lab when we get the necropsy results. Refer to the instructions for "Freshly dead" and "Telemetered" eagles in the "Transfer" section of the [Quick Reference Guide](#) of this handbook for how to send these eagles to a lab, and make sure you include a fully completed lab submission form with the eagle when you send it. If you do not already have a unique ID, make sure you follow the instructions in this handbook for [Assigning a Unique ID](#) to associate with the eagle and include that ID on the lab submission form.

If the eagle is not being sent to a lab, fill out the [FWS Form 3-2481](#) and send it to the following e-mail address: Migbirdreports@fws.gov. This will ensure the information gets entered into IMR, which will be valuable in helping capture quality information we can use for decision-making purposes.

Reporting, Documentation, Collection, and Transfer Procedures

Reporting to Service Law Enforcement

Promptly report to a [Service law enforcement officer](#) any injured/sick eagles or dead eagle remains (intact and non-intact) you find or are told about on either public or private lands. If you can't reach a Service law enforcement officer, try contacting your [Regional Migratory Bird Program Office](#), as they might be able to expedite contact with Service law enforcement. The law enforcement officer will determine if you can collect the eagle, or if it should remain untouched for an investigation. If he/she determines an investigation is not necessary, you may proceed with the documentation, collection, and transfer of the remains following the guidance listed in the [Documentation](#), [Collection](#), and [Transfer](#) sections of this handbook.

If you are unable to immediately reach a Service law enforcement officer (e.g., unable to contact officer via phone or email) for consultation after repeated attempts, follow these steps:

For live eagles:

(1) Sick and injured eagles require very careful handling and treatment, and need to be transferred to a veterinarian or rehabilitator with expertise in the treatment and rehabilitation of injured raptors.

(2) Eagles are also powerful and dangerous animals that can cause serious injury. Unless you have been properly trained, do not approach or handle the eagle yourself unless absolutely necessary. To find out what rehabilitation experts are near you and to get more tips on safe handling of injured eagles, contact your [Regional Migratory Bird Program Office or Permit Office](#), a [Service law enforcement officer](#), or any Regional biologist involved in eagle research.

For dead eagles:

(1) If the dead eagle remains are [fresh](#), proceed with the documentation and collection of the remains following the procedures in the [Documentation](#) and [Collection](#) sections of this handbook, *and* store the remains in a cool location (e.g., refrigerator or cooler with blue ice packs/bags of ice) to preserve them until you can reach an officer. If you are unable to get in touch with a law enforcement officer within 24 hours, you can transfer the eagle following the procedures in the [Transfer](#) section of this handbook for fresh dead eagles.

- If the eagle is found on Friday or Saturday, or it is clear the transfer to the lab will take longer than a few days, you may freeze the remains until transfer is possible.
- If you can't reach Service law enforcement before transferring the eagle, it is important that you ensure the receiving laboratory understands they

need to perform a full forensic necropsy, and that you maintain a complete and comprehensive chain of custody for the eagle (chain of custody is a complete record of the individuals who have had the eagle remains at any given time and the date of transfer from one person to the next - print page 2 of the [Eagle Recovery Tag form](#) to use in recording the chain of custody).

(2) If the dead eagle is **not fresh**, leave it in place and document the remains following the procedures in the [Documentation](#) section of this handbook. If you are unable to get in touch with a law enforcement officer within 24 hours, you may collect the remains following the protocols in the [Collection](#) section of this handbook and store them in a cool place (e.g., refrigerator or cooler with blue ice packs/bags of ice) until an officer can be contacted to approve transfer.

- If you are unable to keep the eagle in a refrigerator or on ice in a cooler and have no other way to cool the remains besides a freezer, then you may freeze the remains until you are able to talk with law enforcement.
- If you do not have a freezer or cooler, keep the eagle as cool as possible until you are able to talk with law enforcement.
- If law enforcement does not take custody of the eagle, follow the instructions in the [Transfer](#) section of this handbook for dead eagle remains that are not fresh.

(3) Regardless of whether the dead eagle is fresh or not fresh, if the eagle was found on Tribal lands or Alaskan Native regional or local village (ANSCA) lands, you must not do anything with it until you have talked to a Service law enforcement officer. The only exception to this prohibition is for telemetered golden eagles.

Documentation

Collecting photos and information about the discovery

When you discover any eagle, live or dead, it is important to capture details about the eagle and its surroundings that may help determine what caused its sickness, injury, or death. You **must** always try to contact Service law enforcement first. However, if an officer indicates that he/she is not interested in an investigation, or if you are unable to immediately reach a Service law enforcement officer for consultation after repeated attempts (which you should record and provide with the eagle), you may start the documentation process.

To ensure documentation is done properly, follow these instructions:

(1) To document the site:

(a) Approach the site carefully so you do not disturb any tracks or footprints that may be in the area. Use the same path and your own footprints to move to and from the eagle.

(b) If the eagle is alive, document the area and take photos from a safe distance.

(c) Take clear photos, which may be used as evidence. Obtain photos in this order:

- (i)** Overall site photos;
- (ii)** Distant photos of the eagle;
- (iii)** Close-up photos of the eagle;
- (iv)** Photos of injuries visible on the eagle;
- (v)** Photos of any other potential evidence, including footprints, bullet casings, bait, utility pole(s) lines/wires, and nearest pole numbers, etc.; and
- (vi)** Photos of any transmitters, bands, or other scientific research equipment on the eagle remains. Include date and time on all photos, if possible.

(d) Be cautious if you suspect poisoning or aren't sure what the cause of death is. Evidence of poisoning is often not obvious. Clues around dead eagles that may indicate poisoning include:

- The presence of dead scavenging beetles, other insects, or mammals near the eagle remains;
- An eagle found with its wings spread in a contorted position, notable overall body hemorrhage, or considerable bloody discharge from beak or nostrils; and
- Eagles found at water sources should be suspect because some poisons drive eagles to drink incessantly.

If poisons are present or suspected, do not go near the eagle remains. Take photos from a distance, obtain GPS coordinates for the site, and notify Service law enforcement that you will not be collecting the eagle remains. Give law enforcement the exact location of the eagle remains (GPS coordinates) and request assistance to retrieve the remains.

Recording documentation data

Although all injury and mortality information is important, there is a particular interest in the following:

1. Eagles injured or killed at utilities (e.g., wind, solar, electric, gas (methane) burner, or petroleum production) that were retrieved under a Special Purpose Utility (SPUT) or Eagle Take permit (see [50 CFR 22.26](#)). At this time, Service employees *do not* have to report eagle incidents that occur at facilities that already report through the Bird Fatality/Injury Reporting Program (BIMRS) or the current SPUT reporting process. Facilities that currently report to the Service under a SPUT permit or into the BIMRS system will be transitioned to IMR. Until then, they should continue to report via their current reporting mechanism. There is a system currently in place allowing this information to be compiled in an IMR compatible format and added retroactively to the IMR system at a later date. However, ensuring that the facility is reminded that they should report any eagle incidents as soon as possible both to Service law enforcement and through their current reporting mechanism is helpful and encouraged.
2. Any eagle mortality/injury incidents (whether criteria #1 above applies or not) where:
 - (a) The specific location information and specific details (e.g. description of physical injuries, nearby infrastructure, photos) regarding the incident are available;
 - (b) The eagle is [freshly dead](#) and fully intact;
 - (c) The eagle is telemetered or banded;
 - (d) The injury or mortality may fit a pattern of recurring, unmitigated take, such as electrocutions, wind turbine strikes, high vehicle collision areas, etc.; or
 - (e) The injury or mortality is part of a mass mortality or injury event.

When you log the information in IMR¹, keep the following in mind: You should fill in as many details as possible and attach any photos you took. You can record information in IMR either before or after you transfer the eagle.

Assigning a unique ID

When you record the details of the injury or mortality in IMR, the system will automatically generate a unique ID for the record you create, which you should include on any tags or documentation you send with the eagle. However, if you...

1. Plan on recording the information in IMR after the transfer,
2. Are sending the eagle to [SCWDS](#), [NWHC](#), or a lab on the [List of Other Approved Labs](#) and are using the lab submission form, or
3. Are printing a copy of the [Eagle Recovery Tag](#) provided on pages 38-39 (as opposed to using a pre-printed laminated copy)...

...make sure that before you transfer the bird, you have included a unique ID on the documentation (e.g., [Eagle Recovery Tag](#) and/or lab submissions form) that you send

¹ You do not need to create an IMR record if the eagle is being shipped to NWHC, SCWDS, or a lab on the [List of Other Approved Labs](#) because we have arranged to receive the information on the necropsy submission form with the necropsy results directly from these labs, and will make sure it gets into IMR.

with the eagle. Make sure you assign only one unique ID per eagle and that it is on all documentation being sent with the eagle. So, for instance, if you have both a preprinted Eagle Recovery Tag with a unique ID and a lab submission form, make sure you put the unique ID that's on the Eagle Recovery Tag on the necropsy submission form, so the lab includes that unique ID with the necropsy results. For eagles sent using Fedex or another mail carrier that issues a tracking number, if you do not already have a unique ID (e.g., you haven't logged a record in IMR, or you do not have a pre-printed Eagle Recovery Tag with a unique ID already included), you may use the carrier tracking number (e.g., Fedex tracking number) as the unique ID. Alternately, you can create your own unique ID. To create your own unique ID, copy and paste the following formula into a blank cell of an Excel document:

=CONCATENATE("ID",RANDBETWEEN(1,1000000000)). Hit "Enter" on your keyboard, and the formula will generate an ID. Repeat the copy and paste each time you need a new unique ID.

If the eagle is wearing a leg band; or leg/wing color marker

If the eagle is wearing a leg band or color marker, report information on the band recovery to the Bird Banding Laboratory at: www.reportband.gov . Important information on the location and time of death can be lost if bands are not reported immediately.

- Make sure the band number is also recorded somewhere in your IMR record.
- Leave the band on the eagle when transferring it to its next destination.

Collection

For live eagles:

(1) Sick and injured eagles require very careful handling and treatment, and need to be transferred to a veterinarian or rehabilitator with expertise in the treatment and rehabilitation of injured raptors. Eagles are powerful and dangerous animals that can cause serious injury.

(2) To find out what rehabilitation experts are near you and to get more tips on safe handling of sick or injured eagles, contact your [Regional Migratory Bird Program Office or Permit Office](#), [a Service law enforcement officer](#), or any Regional biologist involved in eagle research.

(a) If at all possible, make sure an experienced individual approaches and handles the eagle.

(b) If you suspect that the eagle was poisoned, do not handle the eagle unless you have been properly trained, have the appropriate safety equipment, and can transport the bird safely.

(c) If you need to handle the eagle yourself, take appropriate precautions. Protect your head, face, hands, and arms to avoid injury.

For dead eagle remains:

(1) At a minimum, wear rubber, latex, or nitrile gloves.

(2) Attach a tag securely to the remains, if possible. If the eagle is intact, attach it to the leg. You can use either an OLE evidence seizure tag, a lab submission form (if sending the eagle to a lab), or a tag with fields that capture, at a minimum, the information listed in the "[Eagle Recovery Tags](#)" section of this handbook. If the tag/form does not have a unique ID, use the instructions in this handbook for [assigning a unique ID](#); or if you've entered a record into IMR about the finding, use the unique ID generated by IMR. Put this unique ID on the Eagle Recovery Tag.

(3) Place the eagle in a plastic bag, seal the bag, and label it. Do not tape or tie the bag close to the tail feathers.

(4) We recommend that you double bag the eagle remains. If possible, transport the eagle separately from the driver's compartment of your vehicle, such as in the back of a pickup truck, or store it in a cooler for transport.

(5) If the dead eagle is fresh, keeping it cool, but not frozen (e.g., in a refrigerator or cooler with blue ice packs/bag of ice), increases its usefulness during necropsy, especially if avian disease is a possible cause of death. Do not store the eagle in a fridge that personnel at the duty station use for their meals.

- If you are unable to keep the eagle in a refrigerator or on ice in a cooler and

- have no other way to cool the remains besides a freezer, then you may freeze the remains until you are able to talk with law enforcement.
- If you are unable to transfer the eagle to a lab within 24 hours of discovery, you should freeze the eagle.

Transfer

For general transfer instructions please follow the instructions in the [Transfer section](#) of the Quick Reference Guide.

For instructions on sending eagles to specific labs, please follow the instructions associated with individual labs detailed per lab below.

Sending Fresh Dead Eagles to the USGS National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC)

Before you transfer fresh dead eagle remains, contact a Service law enforcement officer.

If a Service law enforcement officer authorizes you to transfer fresh dead eagle remains, follow the steps below. (For fresh telemetered golden eagles, follow our separate protocol for "[Submission of Telemetered Eagles to the SCWDS Lab](#)").

(a) Contact the NWHC promptly at 608-270-2480, or NWHC-epi@usgs.gov, with information about the eagle remains, to coordinate shipment, and to get detailed shipping instructions. If NWHC says they are unable to take a bird due to a high caseload, [SCWDS](#) may take spillover remains (contact SCWDS at 706-542-1741, if this occurs).

Notes about sending eagles to NWHC:

- NWHC should be able to handle birds that have been euthanized (euthanasia does create some changes in the carcass, but it's usually possible for the lab to work around that).
- If an eagle has been administered antibiotics, it's likely that NWHC will not accept it because this can make it difficult to reach a diagnosis.
- NWHC will only return the hard-sided type coolers because they can be decontaminated.
- NWHC will not send you a shipping box for you to use to ship them an eagle.

(b) Based on information you provide, NWHC will determine the most appropriate course of action for diagnostic evaluation. NWHC staff will help you determine the best preservation method (fresh, chilled, frozen, etc.) and shipping method.

(c) Fill out a *Diagnostic Services Request Worksheet* and include it with the remains. You can find the Request Worksheet and instructions on the NWHC website: http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/mortality_events/reporting.jsp.

Note: If you use a Request Worksheet, you do not have to include a [Eagle Recovery Tag](#). You will need to fill out as much information on the worksheet as you can about the specific location where the eagle was found and any information that might help indicate what caused its death. Also include the following:

1. A note indicating whether Service law enforcement determined that they did not plan to use the eagle for an investigation, and include the name of the officer who made this determination,
2. [A Unique ID](#), (which may be the Eagle Recovery Tag #), and
3. If law enforcement does not respond to your attempt to contact them within 24 hours to confirm an investigation is not needed, a completed chain of custody form, which you can find on the second page of the [Eagle Recovery Tag](#) form.

(d) Promptly send the eagle remains to the NWHC. Ship by FedEx® overnight to NWHC at the following address:

United States Geological Survey
National Wildlife Health Center
6006 Schroeder Road
Madison, WI 53711

Sending Non-fresh Dead Eagle Remains to the Service's National Eagle Repository (NER) in Commerce City, Colorado

NOTE: Do not send any eagle suspected or known to have died of poisoning (except lead poisoning) or avian diseases, such as West Nile Virus, to the NER. If you suspect poisoning or any potentially illegal activity (e.g., shooting, trapping, electrocution), contact the appropriate Service law enforcement program before you do anything. If you are uncertain whether or not the NER will accept an eagle, send it to the NER and the NER will decide.

- For questions about suspected avian disease cases, contact the [Service Wildlife Health Office](#).
- For more details on sending eagles to the NER, visit the [National Eagle Repository Fact Sheet](#) on the NER website.

It is important that you properly package these dead eagle remains to prevent damage and further decomposition in shipping. Follow these steps.

(a) Pack the remains for shipment in a sturdy box large enough to accommodate the shipment and to allow adequate room for the length of the feathers. Do not bend wing or tail feathers. You may use an appropriately sized cooler. Use a rigid styrofoam cooler only if you are putting it in a cardboard box. If you provide a return address label, NER will return the cooler if you ask them to.

(b) Ship the eagles in a frozen state. You may use gel packs for ice, but it is not necessary if frozen birds are shipped overnight.

(c) Place each eagle in a double plastic bag to prevent leakage.

(d) Fill the bottom of the box and space around the eagle remains with absorbent material, such as shredded or wadded up paper or newspaper. The paper will reduce the chance of the remains being damaged and will absorb leakage.

(e) Make sure a [unique ID](#) number is included with any remains when you send them to the NER. This could be the unique ID for the record you logged in the Service's IMR system, if you created the record prior to transfer of the remains.

(f) Make sure to log all details, including photos, in the [Service's IMR system, or in a compatible database](#). It's particularly important you record this information if the priority conditions we describe in this handbook in "[Documentation/recording documentation data](#)" apply. If you create a record after transfer, make sure the unique ID assigned to the eagle remains before transfer and/or the Eagle Recovery Tag # is included somewhere in the IMR record.

(g) Call the NER at 303-287-2110. They can send you a prepaid shipping label and packing instructions via email. NER can also mail shipping materials (if needed) upon request. Ship eagle remains to:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Eagle Repository
6550 Gateway Road
Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Building 128
Commerce City, CO 80022

(h) NER prefers that you use Federal Express® as the carrier when shipping eagle remains. The packaging method described above complies with FedEx® shipping requirements for dead animals. Use overnight shipping, and **ship no later in the week than Wednesday.**

(i) You can use another overnight carrier if you do not have access to Federal Express®. However, NER cannot pay for or reimburse you for the shipping costs when you use another carrier.

Shipping guidelines are also outlined on the NER website at <http://www.fws.gov/eaglerepository/factsheets.php>

Documentation for the Service's law enforcement officers: All eagles that are part of an investigation must be transferred using the "Repository Property Transfer Form." Please complete the form in its entirety. It will be signed and returned to you to close your case. DO NOT USE "Chain of Custody Forms."

Instructions for Shipping Eagles to the CDFW Wildlife Investigations Laboratory

All eagles found in CA and not of interest to Service law enforcement should go to the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) Wildlife Investigations Laboratory

Carcasses sent to the CDFW Wildlife Investigations Lab should be dead less than 48 hours and have no signs of scavenging or insect infestation. Carcasses should be labeled with the date and location where they were found and collected into a plastic bag (use care not to break or bend feathers). Under most conditions, carcasses can be frozen until submission. You will receive more detailed instructions, as well as information regarding packaging and shipping, when you notify the CDFW Wildlife Investigations Lab about the recovered carcass you plan to send.

Before sending any eagle to CDFW, notify Dr. Krysta Rogers:

Dr. Krysta Rogers
Senior Environmental Scientist
Avian Specialist
Wildlife Investigations Laboratory
California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW)
1701 Nimbus Road, Suite D
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
(916) 358-1662
Krysta.Rogers@wildlife.ca.gov

See **packaging instructions** on the next two pages.

See [CDFW Raptor Carcass Recovery Form](#) to fill out and include with the eagle. When sending eagles to the CDFW Wildlife Investigations Laboratory, please complete this form in as much detail as possible with as specific a location on the initial finding, and include it in the package when you send the eagle.

Note: If you're filling out a [CDFW Raptor Carcass Recovery Form](#), you do not need to include an [Eagle Recovery Tag](#). Also include a note indicating whether a Service law enforcement officer made a determination about whether or not he/she planned to investigate the eagle's death. Include the name of the officer.

Avian Carcass Packaging Instructions

General Tips for Avian Carcass Collection & Storage

- Collect only the freshest carcasses for submission (3 carcasses of the same species are preferred during a mortality event). Carcasses more than 24-48 hours old yield little to no information at necropsy. Avoid carcasses with obvious insect or maggot infestation, a noticeably foul odor, or that have been scavenged.
- **Record species, location, and date for each carcass.** Tag each carcass with this information if possible, or include on card inside plastic bag with carcass. Carcasses submitted without date and location found, will not be necropsied.
- Store specimens in refrigerator until shipped. Try to ship specimens as soon as possible after collection to avoid having to freeze the carcasses as this will limit diagnostic value.
- If specimens do need to be stored for 3 or more days (e.g. over the weekend or holiday) freeze the specimens as soon as possible after collecting to minimize decomposition. However, if fresher specimens become available just before shipment, ship the newly collected specimens, rather than the frozen carcasses.

General Tips for Avian Carcass Packaging & Shipment

- Place each carcass in separate plastic bag and seal the bag (Figure 1). Remember to label with species, date, and location.
- Place the bagged carcass(es) in a second plastic bag and seal the bag (Figure 2).
- Place the bagged carcass(es) inside Styrofoam cooler, inside cardboard shipping box (Figure 3).
- Place frozen gel pack inside cooler, placing a layer of newspaper between the carcass and the gel pack.



Avian Carcass Packaging Instructions

General Tips for Avian Carcass Packaging & Shipment

- Pack remaining empty space inside cooler with absorbent material such as newspaper.
- Place **datasheet and/or intake sheet** inside separate plastic bag with species, date, and location found, at a minimum.
- Seal the box with packaging tape.
- Attach **Fed Ex shipping label** to outside top of cardboard shipping box (Figure 4). Remove any old shipping labels first, if necessary.
- Packages should ship **Fed Ex priority overnight** or **standard overnight** only.
- Attach Refrigerate Upon Arrival label or handwrite on outside side of cardboard shipping box.
- Notify Krysta Rogers at 916-358-1662 or krysta.rogers@wildlife.ca.gov of shipment.
- Ship specimens Monday through Wednesday to ensure the package will arrive at lab before the weekend.

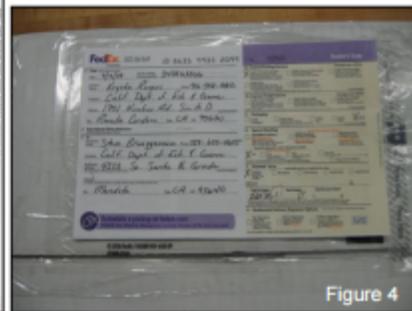


Figure 4

Questions, please contact:
Krysta Rogers
Avian Diseases & Mortality
 Wildlife Investigations Lab
 Office 916-358-1662
Krysta.Rogers@wildlife.ca.gov

Secondary contact:
Stella McMillin
Pesticides
 Wildlife Investigations Lab
 Office 916-358-2954
Stella.McMillin@wildlife.ca.gov

Mail or Fax to:
 Wildlife Investigations Laboratory
 California Department of Fish and Wildlife
 1701 Nimbus Road, Suite D
 Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
 Phone: 916-358-2790; Fax: 916-358-2814

Lab contact:
 Krysta Rogers
 Avian Mortality Investigations
 Phone: 916-358-2790
 E-mail: krysta.rogers@wildlife.ca.gov



Raptor Carcass Recovery Form

Observation Date (mm/dd/yyyy):

Reporter:	<input type="checkbox"/> Observer is same as reporter.
Affiliation:	Observer:
Address:	Address:
E-mail:	E-mail:
Phone:	Phone:

Location Description (please be as detailed as possible; coordinates preferred)
 Specific mortality location (address, refuge unit, intersection, park, etc.):

County: _____ Nearest City: _____

Datum: NAD 27 NAD 83 WGS 84*

Coordinate system: UTM Zone 10 or Zone 11 OR Geographic (Latitude & Longitude)

Coordinates: _____

Coordinate source: _____ *Google Maps/Earth use WGS 84

Carcass Information (include photos of carcass as found & surrounding area, if possible)

Species	Age (juvenile/adult)	Number

Clinical signs (any unusual behaviors or physical appearance):

Problem area description (urban, rural, agriculture, habitat type, waterbody type):

Hazards (artificial food/water, roads, power lines, power poles, wind turbines, pesticides):

Environmental factors (weather, food/water shortages, fire):

Sending Telemetered Golden Eagles to the SCWDS Lab

These eagle mortality investigation and dead eagle remains submission protocols were developed by the DMBM and the SCWDS laboratory in Athens, GA. Service employees should follow this protocol when the Service law enforcement officer determines that law enforcement involvement is no longer necessary. If the dead eagle is fresh and you are unable to reach a Service law enforcement officer within 24 hours, follow the guidance in the "[Reporting](#)" section of this handbook for how to proceed.

DMBM's study of telemetered eagles includes, as a major objective, determining the cause of death of any eagles that die and can be recovered. The following protocol describes the steps that employees should take to collect, store, and ship dead eagles to the SCWDS laboratory. After an eagle arrives at the SCWDS laboratory, SCWDS staff will perform a full post-mortem (necropsy) to determine cause of death. The necropsy includes collection of tissue samples for evaluation of contaminant levels.

Dead Eagle Shipment Protocol:

(1) After you collect and assess a dead eagle, call SCWDS at 706-542-1741. Ask for the veterinarian on duty and explain that you have a dead telemetered eagle to submit as part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service project.

- a. If the dead eagle is recovered on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, the veterinarian on duty will ask you to ship the eagle via FedEx® overnight to SCWDS.
- b. **The SCWDS lab is not open on weekends to accept packages.** So, if you recover the eagle on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, store it until Monday for shipment.
 - i. If you recover the eagle on Friday or Saturday, place it in the freezer until Monday shipment.
 - ii. If you recover the eagle on Sunday, place it in the refrigerator or in a plastic heavy duty trash bag and on ice in a cooler until Monday shipment.

(2) Download and fill out the SCWDS Necropsy Submission Form: https://vet.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Clinical_Case_Submission_Form-1-16-2014.pdf.

Under "Person Submitting Case" on the top left, please use the following:

NAME: Sam Gibbs

AGENCY: USFWS,

ADDRESS: 16450 NW 31st Place, Chiefland, FL 32626,

PHONE: 571-216-5776,

EMAIL: samantha_gibbs@fws.gov

Please also place your contact information in the top right corner as the person finding the animal. Also include the following:

- a. An Eagle Recovery Tag (if available) securely attached to the leg of the eagle.
- b. A note indicating whether Service law enforcement determined that they

did not plan to use the eagle for an investigation, and include the name of the officer who made this determination,

- c. [A Unique ID](#), and
- d. A completed chain of custody form. If law enforcement does not respond to your attempt to contact them within 24 hours to confirm an investigation is not needed, a completed chain of custody form, which is on the second (back) page of the [Eagle Recovery Tag](#).

(3) Pack the double-bagged eagle remains in a cooler with plenty of frozen blue ice packs/ bags of ice. Fill the bottom of the box and space around the remains with absorbent material, such as shredded or wadded up paper or newspaper. The paper will reduce the chance of the remains being damaged and will absorb leakage. Place a copy of the completed SCWDS Necropsy Submission Form in a Ziploc® bag and put it in the cooler with the remains.

(4) Ship by FedEx® overnight to SCWDS at the following address:

Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS)
Department of Population Health
589 D.W. Brooks Drive
Wildlife Health Building
College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia 30602
Phone (706) 542-1741
Fax (706) 542-5865

(5) Email the FedEx® package tracking number and an electronic copy of the Necropsy Submission Form to the SCWDS veterinarian on duty.

SCWDS's Testing Protocol:

(1) All birds:

- (a)** Radiograph (x-ray).
- (b)** Gross pathology.
- (c)** Histopathology.
- (d)** Collection of tissues for toxicology testing on all birds.
 - i. Lead and mercury.
 - ii. Organophosphates and carbamates, and
 - iii. Organochlorines (perform microbiology and special stains if warranted by gross or histopathology findings).

(2) SCWDS sends the final diagnostic reports to whoever sent the eagle. They also send the reports to Brian Millsap, the National Raptor Coordinator, and Sam Gibbs in Refuges at the following addresses:

Brian Millsap
National Raptor Coordinator
Division of Migratory Bird Management
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113
Phone (505) 761-4724
Cell (505) 559-3963
e-mail Brian_A_Millsap@fws.gov.

Samantha E. J. Gibbs, DVM PhD
Wildlife Veterinarian, Wildlife Health Office
Natural Resource Program Center, National Wildlife Refuge System
Veterinary Hospital, Patuxent National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Service; Stationed at Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge
16450 NW 31st Place, Chiefland, FL 32626
Cell (571) 216-5776
e-mail Samantha_Gibbs@fws.gov.

Shipping Payment for Eagles Sent to SCWDS, NWHC, and Select Labs

(For Service Personnel Use Only and Third Parties on a Case-by-Case Basis Only Under the Conditions Listed Below)

NOTE: Use this protocol for shipments of [freshly dead](#) or telemetered eagles to the NWHC, SCWDS, and select labs as indicated in the [List of Other Approved Laboratories section of the handbook](#).

Service employees can directly bill the shipment to the USFWS Fedex account #, which employees can obtain for a one-time use by contacting the [National Raptor Coordinator](#). Service law enforcement officer employees must **not** use this Fedex account number for shipments by OLE employees to the [National Forensic Laboratory](#), for shipments to the [National Eagle Repository](#), or for shipments to the labs listed in the [List of Other Approved Laboratories](#) who pay for their **own shipping costs**. Please make sure you call the lab before shipping to make sure they are willing to take the eagle and that it fits the description of a specimen they normally would accept.

Instructions for shipping of freshly dead eagles/dead eagles with transmitters using the USFWS Fedex account #:

1. On the Fedex slip in Section # 7 (Payment), indicate you want the costs charged to a "Third Party" and put the Fedex # on the line provided
2. Under Section 2 of the slip "Internal Billing Reference," put "Eagle Remains Shipment to Lab." This will help our finance staff in HQ know what funds to use to pay the shipment costs when Fedex bills us.
3. If managing shipments online, use the corresponding "Third Party billing" and "Internal Reference" options.

Conditions for Use of the USFWS Fedex Account Number by Third Parties:

Service employees may give the Fedex account number to a third party for shipments *only under the following conditions:*

- The employee has assisted the third party in determining how to properly proceed (e.g., make sure they have contacted the a law enforcement officer, determine if the eagle is appropriate to send to the labs, help determine which lab to send it to, make sure they follow the steps above when filling out the shipping information, etc.).
- The employee should make sure the third party has [a permit or falls under a permit exception to pick up birds](#); otherwise, they need to have a permitted individual come pick up the bird for them.
- The employee should make sure the third party understands how to package the bird properly (double-triple bagging, leak proof containers, absorbent materials, etc.) to prevent leakage, smell, and further decomposition during transport.
- The employee contacts the National Raptor Coordinator to obtain the Fedex number for one time use.

Recording Eagle Injury/Mortality Information in the Service's Injury and Mortality Reporting (IMR) System or a Compatible Spreadsheet

How to establish an account in the Service's IMR system: Any Department of the Interior employee can create an account in the Service's IMR system by logging in to access "Secure Applications" on the Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS) with his or her Active Directory username and password at: <http://ecos.fws.gov/ecos/home.action>. Once logged in, select the IMR application on the ECOS home page.

When to use a compatible database: If, for some reason, you are not able to access or use the Service's system, you may store the data in a database that allows easy transfer to the IMR system (i.e., a compatible database). To view a list of criteria for a compatible database or to download one, see the "Injury and Mortality Reporting System Compatible Spreadsheet" section below. Those not reporting eagle incidents directly into the Service's system should contact the [National Raptor Coordinator](#) to establish a data sharing process.

About recording information:

- You must include a unique ID with any information you send with an eagle or eagle remains to one of the laboratories.
- If you record the information after collection and transfer of the eagle, you will need to generate your own unique ID to include on the Eagle Recovery Tag and to enter into IMR or your compatible spreadsheet at a later date. To create your own unique ID, copy and paste the following formula into a blank cell of an Excel document: =CONCATENATE("ID",RANDBETWEEN(1,1000000000)). Hit "Enter" on your keyboard, and the formula will generate an ID. Repeat the copy and paste each time you need a new unique ID. When you are ready to enter the information in IMR or a compatible database, make sure you enter that unique ID somewhere in the record (e.g., in the "Local Specimen Number" field or "Additional Notes" field).
- If you've entered the information into the system/database before you transfer the eagle remains, use the ID number the system generates on any Eagle Recovery Tags, necropsy submission forms, evidence seizure tags, or other forms you're sending with the bird.
- Any future recipients of the eagle or eagle remains should be told that the unique ID should always be part of follow-up reports or other information about the eagle or eagle remains.
- If an eagle is found on a facility operated by a permittee or a facility with a reporting agreement with the Service, make sure it is clear who will be reporting the information about the discovery to the Service so that we do not have duplicate records. Some permit conditions make reporting the responsibility of

- the permittee, while some Regions choose to enter the information themselves.
- If the permittee is doing the reporting, and the eagle is transferred offsite by Service staff (to a lab, rehabber, Repository, etc.), the permittee should follow up with us to provide the unique ID associated with the record.
 - If the permittee does not provide a unique ID, we encourage Service employees to follow up and get that number to put on the Eagle Recovery Tag, necropsy submission form, evidence seizure tag, and any other information that is traveling with the bird.

Injury and Mortality Reporting System Compatible Spreadsheet

An IMR-compatible database is a tabular database (e.g. Excel, CSV) file. The file should have the field categories we show in yellow below, and associated standardized option terminology we show in blue below. We use red asterisks (*) to indicate required fields. If a required field is not applicable for your reporting (e.g., no project proponent exists), populate that field with "NA."

To download an already-prepared version of a compatible database in Excel 2010, click on the following link, or copy and paste it into your internet browser:

<http://www.fws.gov/policy/IMRCompatibleEagleReportForm.xlsm>

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you are not using the online IMR system, but are instead using the Excel sheet we provide or have created your own based on the criteria below, notify the [National Raptor Coordinator](#). You'll need to arrange for regular, periodic submissions of your dataset.

CORE INFORMATION FIELDS:

*Primary Contact Name:

Primary Contact Title:

*Primary Contact Phone:

MORTALITY/INJURY REPORTING FIELDS:

Location Specimen Found

*Latitude (Decimal Degrees/WGS84 Datum):

*Longitude (Decimal Degrees/WGS84 Datum):

Surrounding Habitat:

- Agriculture
- Desert
- Forest
- River or Stream
- Shrubland and Grassland
- Water
- Urban
- Wetland

- Other (describe)

Specimen Information

*Species:

- Bald Eagle
- Golden Eagle
- Unknown Eagle

*How identified:

- Expert opinion
- Feather atlas
- Field guide
- Guess
- Other resource

*Number of individuals:

*Condition of animal:

- Alive
- Dead

Condition details: *(If alive, indicate if the animal is injured or sick. If dead, indicate if eagle is intact, freshly killed [eyes moist], semi-fresh [stiff], partially decomposed, feathers and/or bones, etc.)*

*How found:

- Carcass survey
- Incidental finding

*Date discovered:

Date collected:

Tissue or blood samples taken?:

- Yes
- No

Feather samples taken?:

- Yes
- No

*Did you see the injury or mortality event?:

- Yes
- No

***Suspected cause** *(Record what you believe is the cause of mortality or injury. Select "Unknown," if you do not know. If possible, attach a photo of the animal on the summary page that appears when you save this record. Also, in the "Hazards or Attractants" section below, provide information on any nearby attractants or bird hazards that you observed in the area where the bird was found.)*

- Barotrauma
- Blinded/optical damage (radiant flux)
- Collision
- Collision with aircraft
- Collision with fence

- Collision with solar panel/heliostat
- Collision with vehicle
- Collision with wind turbine
- Collision with window
- Collision with wire
- Collision/electrocution
- De-oiled
- Determination pending
- Disease
- Drowned
- Drowned (container/pit)
- Drowned (entangled)
- Drowned (evaporation pond)
- Drowned (stock tank)
- Electrocution
- Emaciation
- Entangled
- Entangled (net)
- Entrapped
- Exposure/dehydration
- Fall from nest
- Fire
- Killed/injured by animal while entangled
- Killed/injured by animal
- Oiled
- Poisoned
- Poisoned (lead)
- Poisoned (pesticide)
- Salt encrustation
- Salt toxicity
- Scorched or singed
- Shot
- Starvation
- Trapped
- Trauma
- Weather
- Unknown
- Other

Suspected Cause Details:

Probable cause: *(Identify the most probable cause of death or injury to the animal, based on the evidence at the site. Select "Unknown" if not known. If the suspected cause is not listed in the picklist menu, select "Other" and provide more information in the "Probable Cause Details" field.)*

- Barotrauma

- Blinded/optical damage (radiant flux)
- Collision
- Collision with aircraft
- Collision with fence
- Collision with solar panel/heliostat
- Collision with vehicle
- Collision with wind turbine
- Collision with window
- Collision with wire
- Collision/electrocution
- De-oiled
- Determination pending
- Disease
- Drowned
- Drowned (container/pit)
- Drowned (entangled)
- Drowned (evaporation pond)
- Drowned (stock tank)
- Electrocution
- Emaciation
- Entangled
- Entangled (net)
- Entrapped
- Exposure/dehydration
- Fall from nest
- Fire
- Killed/injured by animal while entangled
- Killed/injured by animal
- Oiled
- Poisoned
- Poisoned (lead)
- Poisoned (pesticide)
- Salt encrustation
- Salt toxicity
- Scorched or singed
- Shot
- Starvation
- Trapped
- Trauma
- Weather
- Unknown
- Other

Probable cause details:

Sex:

Age:

How aged:

- Bloom and Clark 2001
- Expert opinion
- Guess
- Harmata and Montopoli 2013
- USFWS Feather Guide
- Other

Nearby Hazards and Environmental Attractants

Nearby Feature (s):

- Brine pond
- Building
- Communications tower
- Contaminant
- Distribution line
- Evaporation pond
- Fencing
- Guy wires
- Heliostat
- Light
- Other machinery
- Pond net
- PV panel
- Reflective surface
- Road
- Solar concentrating tower
- Solar trough
- Train tracks
- Transmission Line
- Transmission tower
- Vehicle
- Water supply pond
- Wind turbine
- Other machinery
- Other (describe)

Distance from specimen (meters):

Feature description:

Disposition

*Disposition Information:

- Buried onsite
- Died

- Disposition pending
- Euthanized
- Freezer on site
- Incinerated
- Lab (provide name)
- Law Enforcement
- Left in place
- Sent to National Eagle Repository
- Sent to Rehab Center
- Released to wild
- Transferred to other permittee (enter permit # or name and phone)
- Used in research trials (searcher efficiency and carcass removal)
- Veterinarian
- Zoo
- Other (describe)
- Unknown

Disposition History: (Additional relevant information about the disposition, including disposition history, since the disposition can change over time).

Specimen Identification

***Unique Record ID#:** (Each record should have a unique ID # associated with it. If Eagle Recovery Tag # is not available, generate a unique ID using the following: **the report year (yyyy) + the phone number of the primary contact for the spreadsheet + the row number of the incident in the spreadsheet** – e.g., for the row 1 record in a spreadsheet the unique ID might be: **2015703-358-05681**)

USGS Band Number:

Local Specimen Number:

Special Identifier:

Notes and Photos

Additional Notes:

Photos: (If you have photos of the incident/specimen, indicate this in the “Photos” column of the spreadsheet and store the photos with a copy of your spreadsheet. **NOTE:** Reference the unique record ID# assigned to the incident in the photo file name).

Supplemental Information - Necropsy

Necropsy Conducted by:

Final Diagnosis:

Clinical History Notes:

Disease Agents:

- Aspergillosis
- Avian Influenza
- Avian pox
- Avian vacuolar myelinopathy
- Coccidiosis
- E. Coli
- Leucocytozoan sp.
- Mycobacteriosis
- Newcastle disease virus
- Salmonella
- Toxoplasma sp.
- West Nile Virus
- Pastuerella multocida (avian cholera)
- Sarcocystis sp.
- Trichomonas gallinae

Toxicology Sample Type:

- Blood
- Bolus
- Bone
- Brain
- Feather
- Feces (mte)
- Gastrointestinal tract
- Kidney
- Liver
- Muscle
- Other (describe)

Contaminants:

- Arsenic
- Avitrol
- Barbiturates
- Brodifacoum
- Bromadiolone
- Cadmium
- Carbamates
- Chorophacionon
- Copper
- Coumachlor

- Coumatetralyl
- Difenacoum
- Diphacinone
- iron
- Lead
- Manganese
- Mercury
- Molybdenum
- NSAIDS
- Organophosphates
- Starlicide
- Strychnine
- Warfarine
- Zinc
- Other (describe)

Supplemental Information – Weather on Day of Incident (if known)

Weather Conditions:

- Clear
- Fog
- Rain
- Snow
- Wind

Wind Speed (kph):

Wind Direction:

Temperature (Degrees C):

Humidity (%):

Barometric Pressure (mb):

Supplemental Information – Morphological Characteristics

Weight (grams):

Wing chord (mm):

Hallux (mm):

Culmen (mm):

Tarsus (mm):

Footpad (mm):

Eagle Recovery Tags

Service law enforcement officers will use OLE evidence seizure tags for eagles that are a part of an active law enforcement investigation.

The Service's Eagle Recovery Tags (displayed on the following pages) are printed for the the Service and are yellow bordered on waterproof paper. These tags are durable, tie-on tags that are to be securely tied to the leg or remains of the eagle. Regional Migratory Bird staff may have Eagle Recovery Tags available for your use. Contact the Regional Eagle Coordinators or the [National Raptor Coordinator](#) to inquire about obtaining Eagle Recovery Tags.

If Service Eagle Recovery Tags are not available, print a copy of the tag from the following two pages, fill out data fields, [assign a unique ID](#) and place it on the tag in the "sequential number here" field.

If the Service law enforcement officer needs to retain the eagle as part of a law enforcement investigation, they will use their own tag and add any necessary information.

EAGLE RECOVERY TAG

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Division of Migratory Bird Management

USGS BAND # (if present)
Has the band #, if present, been reported to USGS?
YES NO

[sequential number here]

Go to: www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/bblret/

OTHER UNIQUE ID (Type/color/ID #, e.g. patagial tag, color band):

DATE RECOVERED

//

MORTALITY DATE

/ /

Check One

Known

Estimated

SPECIES

AGE

SEX

RECOVERY LOCATION: [State/County AND LAT/LONG (Dec. Degrees preferred, UTM accepted)]. If LAT/LONG unknown, please include Township, Range and Section, address, road marker, etc.]

FOUND BY (NAME):

AFFILIATION: PHONE: E-MAIL:

RECOVERED BY (NAME):

AFFILIATION: PHONE: E-MAIL:

RECEIVED BY (NAME):

AFFILIATION: PHONE: E-MAIL:

NOTES (How found, description of location, weather, terrain, etc.):

Federal law restricts the collection and possession of eagles by those not permitted. For questions or more information about proper protocol when discovering a dead or injured eagle, please contact a federal or state conservation law enforcement officer, or ask USFWS Migratory Bird Program staff in your region: <http://www.fws.gov/birds/about-us-regional-offices.php>

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

Transfer of eagle from custody of receiving entity listed on reverse side to:

DATE: / /	Name:	Affiliation/ Phone:

Has a state or federal wildlife law enforcement officer been contacted regarding this eagle?

Name:
 Agency:
 Date of contact:

Notice: the material to which this tag is affixed is in the custody of the United States Government and must not be tampered with, except for permitted activities, under penalty of law: 18 USC 2232.

If the eagle is a recent mortality, and intact, please have a USFWS employee assist you with the transfer of the remains to a laboratory using instructions in the Service Manual Chapter Handbook. If the eagle is not retained by Law Enforcement or used for laboratory analysis, the eagle should be sent to the USFWS National Eagle Repository per the instructions on their website (see: <http://www.fws.gov/eaglerepository/factsheets.php>)

Additional notes:

List of Other Approved Laboratories

Following is a list of contacts and approved laboratories other than the NWHC and SCWDS. Always contact the lab for their approval and any specific instructions before you send any eagles to them. Please contact the [National Raptor Coordinator](#) with any questions about using alternate laboratories.

California

Send all telemetered and [freshly dead](#) eagles found in California to this lab. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Wildlife Investigations Lab pays for shipping. For instructions on proper packaging, shipping and documentation and how to handle shipping fees when sending raptors to this lab, please [click here](#).

Dr. Krysta Rogers
Senior Environmental Scientist
Avian Specialist
Wildlife Investigations Laboratory
California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW)
1701 Nimbus Road, Suite D
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
(916) 358-1662
Krysta.Rogers@wildlife.ca.gov

Michigan

Send [freshly dead](#) and telemetered eagles found in Michigan to this lab first, and alternately to [NWHC \(for freshly dead eagles\)](#) and [SCWDS \(for telemetered eagles\)](#). For instructions on how to handle payment if you need to ship an eagle to this lab, refer to the instructions in the [Shipping Payment for Eagles Sent to SCWDS, NWHC, and Select Labs](#) section of the handbook. For specific shipping instructions for this lab, please contact the lab using the contact information listed below.

Dr. Thomas M. Cooley
Wildlife Biologist/Pathologist
Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Disease Lab
4125 Beaumont Rd.
Lansing, MI 48910
517-336-5034 (Office)
517-336-5116 (Necropsy)
CooleyT2@michigan.gov

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Office Contact Information

National Raptor Coordinator

Contact information for the National Raptor coordinator is available in the Migratory Bird directory at: <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/contactus.html>. The National Raptor Program Coordinator is Dr. Brian Millsap, Phone: 505-761-4724.

Service Law Enforcement

National Wildlife Refuges: For eagles found on National Wildlife Refuges, call the Service Wildlife Enforcement Tip Line at: 1-844-NWR-TIPS (697-8477) to reach a Federal Wildlife Officer in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Please make repeated attempts and call the Migratory Bird Program Office (see below) to assist in locating an officer if you get no response.

All other lands: For eagles found on all other lands, use the following website to locate the appropriate Service OLE Special Agent in your Region: <http://www.fws.gov/le/regional-law-enforcement-offices.html>. Please make repeated attempts and call the Migratory Bird Program Office (see below) to assist in locating an officer if you get no response.

Migratory Bird Regional, Permit, and OLE Office Numbers (Oct. 2020)

If a number listed below does not work, please refer to the Migratory Bird Program website to find current Regional contact information: <http://www.fws.gov/birds/about-us-regional-offices.php>

USFWS Region	States Covered	Migratory Bird Program Office	Migratory Bird Permits	Office of Law Enforcement
Headquarters	N/A	703-358-1714	703-785-4823	703-358-1949
Legacy Region 1 (Interior Regions 9 and 12)	HI, ID, OR, WA	503-231-6164	503-872-2715	503-231-6125
Legacy Region 2 (Interior Regions 6 and 8)	AZ, NM, OK, TX	505-248-6875	505-248-7882	505-248-7889
Legacy Region 3 (Interior Region 3)	IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, MO, OH, WI	612-713-5473	612-713-5436	612-713-5320
Legacy Region 4 (Interior Regions 2 and 4)	AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN	404-679-7070	404-679-7070	404-679-7057
Legacy Region 5 (Interior Region 1)	CT, DE, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, VA, WV	413-253-8643	413-253-8643	413-253-8274
Legacy Region 6 (Interior Regions 5 and 7)	CO, KS, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY	303-236-4409	303-236-8171	303-236-7540
Legacy Region 7 (Interior Region 11)	AK	800-368-8890	907-786-3693	907-786-3311
Legacy Region 8 (Interior Region 10)	CA, NV	916-414-6464	916-414-6464	916-414-6660

Record of Revisions:

10/5/2015:

Modified language in "Recording Documentation Data" section to specify that at this time, Service employees *do not* have to worry about reporting through the Injury and Mortality Reporting (IMR) system eagle incidents that occur at facilities that report to the Service through a permit or agreement with the Service since these reports should be captured by the company themselves through their current reporting mechanism.

3/21/2016:

- **Removed of all references to the term "parts" and replaced with the term "remains"**
- **Updated process for charging of shipping costs to labs for fresh and telemetered eagles** including:
 - Instructions for using one central Fedex Account in lieu of the previous process (where regions used their own Fedex accounts and transferred funds to HQ)
 - Instructions for assisting third parties in billing USFWS for shipments of fresh and telemetered eagles to labs
- **Revised the list of approved labs**
 - Removes the UC Davis Lab
 - Provides clarification of when to ship eagles to state labs on the list of approved labs
 - Provides detailed instructions for shipping eagles to the California Department of Fish & Wildlife Lab
- **Added a protocol for Service law enforcement first responders to the scene of an eagle injury or mortality in order to ensure that basic information about the injury/mortality is collected and sent to DMBM for entry into IMR when the following criteria apply:**
 - the officer decides they will not investigate further: and
 - the eagle will not be sent to a lab
- **Updated instructions to clarify that entry of information into IMR is not necessary when** an eagle is being shipped to NWHC, SCWDS or a lab on the "List of Approved Labs"
- **Updated instructions on including unique IDs on documentation** when sending eagles to a lab or the National Eagle Repository
- **Established employee-specific versions of the Quick Reference Guide** (Refuge staff, Law Enforcement, All Other)

10/13/2020:

- **Clarified instructions regarding how to populate the SCWDS necropsy submission form.** Added that Sam Gibbs' contact information should go in the top left section, while the submitter information should go in the top right section.
- **Removed the central Fedex number from the shipping instructions** and instead instruct individuals to contact the National Raptor Coordinator to obtain this number.
- **Added the new Interior Regions to the contact information page, and updated contact information for various entities where that information has changed.**
- **Made minor revisions to general document for consistency and clarity.**
Made other updates, where appropriate to keep the document consistent with changes since the last update (i.e. updated terminology [including changing "Transfer Tag" to "Eagle Recovery Tag"] and added new IMR picklist options).